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From A Trapper of Furs To A Farmer

By EDITH M. MOORE

ROLL BACK THE years to 1805, one hundred and seventy years, and imagine what the whole western area of the United States was like at that time. 1804 and 1805 were the years in which Lewis and Clark made their historic journey across the midwestern states, through the Rockies and on to the Pacific to the mouth of the Columbia River thus establishing a claim to the land for the United States. Those same years in the far off fur country of Canada, a lad of thirteen joined the forces of the Northwest Fur Company and was sent to English River many miles northwest of the transshipment base at Fort William on Lake Superior. This lad was Joseph Laverdure, who many years later found his home on the South Umpqua River. In 1805, his brothers, Charles and Louis, were at Fort Des Prairies, far to the west, and Fort Dauphin, west of Lake Winnipeg, respectively.

Many names that appear in Oregon history in later years will be noted in the lists of employees of the Northwest Fur Company in those years. Included are Jean Longtin at Lake Winnipeg, as well as Piere Filbeau and Louis Rondeau. At Fort Des Prairies were J. B. Dumont and Jos Quintal (Chantell) among the sixty other men there, while the Fort Dauphin crew numbered thirty-nine, including the clerks, guides, and interpreters. Also in 1804 at Fort Des Prairies, there was a voyageur by the name of Jos. Riquerin dit Laverdure at at Fond du Lac, both in 1804 and 1805, there was a Paul Lavadeur. Could the former have been the father of the three previously mentioned brothers. This is one of the many questions that arise when there seem to be faint records of that era.

Joseph Laverdure is the one whose travels we are most desirous of tracing. There were many years of hard going for those hardy people who followed the life of a trapper, with the "iron rule"—do the other fellow, before he does you—very much a way of life when the contest for trapping grounds became a very murderous affair between the northwesterners and the Hudson Bay Company. When the threat of having their supply lines to the west cut it behooved the partners in the Northwest Fur Company to find other ways in which to get desperately needed supplies to the men in their far flung posts throughout the northwest. They had established forts in the Oregon country within a short time of the visit of Lewis and Clark to the area which had negated a plan to be the first on the Columbia. Ever westward the trappers were sent to search out additional sources of the furs needed to supply

the demand in Europe. One can imagine what a Utopia the valley of the Willamette and the Umpquas would be to men who had been accustomed to the ice and snow of Central Canada and the Rocky mountain country. No doubt they traveled many of these valleys long before recorded visits were made.

Early in the 1820's, when the Northwest Fur Company and the Hudson Bay Company consolidated, Joseph was a trapper with many years of experience. Born either in lower Canada or upper New York state in 1791, he was now in his thirties and had been with the company for sixteen or seventeen years. Some years later, when making his home in the area near what is now Walla Walla, Washington, he was married to Lizette, a member of that group of Indians. He was still evidently engaged in trapping, as a daughter, Angelique, was born to them at Colville, Washington in 1839 according to church records but if a later census was correct she was born in 1837 or early 1838. Emelie, whose recorded birth has not been found in the records available, but who in a later census gave New York State as her birthplace opens the possibility that when Angelique (Ann) was born at Fort Colville, the family could have been enroute to Joseph's old home. It is known that "expresses" could make the trip from Fort Vancouver to Montreal in three months even at that time, so there is entirely a possibility that a party of former Northwesterners did travel east, taking more time no doubt, but eventually arriving so many miles to the old home site. If the census taken in 1870 is correct Emelie was born in 1840 although the name given is "Nellie" which could have been misunderstood "Melie". At any rate, the family had returned to the Oregon Country in 1842 when on April 11th, Xavier was born at Walla Walla. Reportedly they were living in the area of Waiilatpu at the time of the Whitman massacre. A Eseven noted in a census list at this time could possibly have been a mistake listing for Xavier. Another son, Narcisse, is also included in family records but date concerning time of birth has not been a matter of record locally.

With the fur trade rapidly winding down to near extinction, Joseph joined others for a trek to the gold fields of California. He was evidently accompanied by his family as in 1854, on March 2nd, a son, Joseph, Jr., was born. Two years later a daughter, Isabelle, joined the family. While living in the Yreka area, they also lost a daughter, M. Guerite, on August 19, 1849, her death being recorded in the St. Louis Register. Another son, Scott, was born a couple of years later.

Next we find the family, with the name having been changed "Lavadeur" from the former French name, as were many names at those times, coming to the South Umpqua area which no doubt the father had known from his trapping days. Many others of the trapping



Martha Lavadour Kirk of Cayuse, granddaughter of Joseph and Lizzette Lavadour and daughter of Joseph Lavadour, Jr. 84 years of age, taken at her home where Mrs. McClendon was most graciously received.

maternity had already come to the beautiful valley to live including is good friend, Alexander Dumont. The place he chose to build his cabin was just down the river from the donation land claim for which Alexander Dumont had traded his original claim at Days Creek. Located close to the mouth of the creek which later took his name, traces of that cabin were still visible after the Lavadour school was built in 1910. There is now another home at the site. Here on July 29, 1860, the following children were baptized, Paul (Scott) - age 3 whose godparents were Joseph Rivard and Marie Ann Klikitat, Elizabeth (Isobel) - whose godparents were Francois DesNoyer and Marie Finlay (Mrs. Alexander Dumont) and Joseph, Jr. - age 8—whose godparents were Alexander Dumont and Martine Lessart (Mrs. Francois DesNoyer).

At the same time two children of John McGinnis and his wife, the former Angelique Lavadour, were baptised. There were Edward—age 3—whose godparents were Francois DesNoyer and Martine Lessart and Marie Helena—age 5—had as her godparents, Basile Courville and Florence Gagnon.

In 1861, Father Blanchett on one of his visits to the area united marriage according to the rites of the Catholic Church, Thomas Salmon (Sadden), son of William Sadden and Mary Pepper (Sadden) of Cayuse, New York and Emilie Laverdure of Douglas County in the pres-

ence of Leonard Steffen and Marie Glasgow, who reside in the area.

At this time it must be remembered that Mr. Lavadour was approaching the age of seventy and in all probability he was beginning to dream of the time when life would not be so strenuous for at all more than fifty five years of trapping, gold mining and travel over countries that were anything but welcoming is all that any man should be expected to endure. But still he had a family to support so possibly a bit of farming was done along with the raising of a garden, maybe a few head of livestock to supplement the wild game available and a son that was old enough to "work out" some may have made the going a little easier. Sometime before 1870, he, his wife and two children still at home moved from this home to a cabin on C Creek in the Galesville area where they lived between the homes of their two sons-in-laws and their daughters. On one side was the McGinnis family now including the parents and six children, ranging in ages from two to fourteen years, Mary, William, Edward, James, Elizabeth and Abraham, the baby. On the other side were the Saddens including Thomas and "Nelly" and the children, Margaret, born in California, Henry, Martha, Joseph, Thomas, Charlie and Peter, from 1 to 10 months old.

In the Lavadour cabin were Joseph, Sr., who was seventy-nine this time, and his wife, Lizette, whose name had been anglicized Elizabeth and the two youngest children, Isabelle and Scott. Not long after this they moved to the Umatilla area where extensive farming had been done by the residents for many years. Here both Mr. and Mrs. Lavadour passed away and are buried in the cemetery at the St. Andrews Mission. The former died in 1892 at the age of one hundred and one, while his wife died the year previously, aged seventy-four.

Of their family, others buried there include Xavier, Scott who died in 1895 and his wife, Carrie, who died in 1891 at the age of twenty-five, Thomas Lavadour, born September 16, 1890, who passed away April 27, 1910 at the age of twenty. It is not known if this is a grandson of the Lavadours, senior but it is reasonable to assume this to be true. Another grave is that of Eugene Lavadour who was the son of Xavier, who was born on August of 1865 and died at the age of six years. Stones have been erected at all of these graves by William and Grace McGinnis, descendants of John and Ann McGinnis.

To trace all the family members of the brothers who began the trapping careers in 1804 or 1805 is an almost impossible task, Charles and Louis left the trapping profession to marry native women belong-



The stones placed at the graves in St. Andrews Mission Cemetery east of Pendleton marking the graves of Joseph Lavadour, Sr. and his wife, Lizzette as well as those of their son, Scott and his wife, Carrie.

Picture taken by Sondra Blakely McClendon of Adams who is the granddaughter of Edith M. Moore who wrote the Lavadour story.

ng to tribes in Montana. Later some of their families moved into Idaho.

Following the McGinnis family in 1871, they had another daughter, Susan, who was born in 1871 and who married Marcellus Rondeau. Mary McGinnis married Sergeant William Connally of Fort Klamath, James McGinnis's wife was named Julia. ← ?6 millie Blair

Joseph Lavadour, Jr. married Mary Alice Bigham and they had seven children, the eldest surviving member being Martha Lavadour, 84 years of age who lives at Cayuse. Albert Lavadour, 82 years of age, lives at Pendleton. Iva Erickson, a daughter, passed away earlier this year at her home in Santa Rosa, California. Other children of the family were Leonard, Eva Lavadour Rondeau, Harvey Lavadour who is thought to have been the eldest and who is buried in Riddle and Mary Lavadour.

George Rondeau of Grants Pass is the son of Marcellus Rondeau and Susan McGinnis Rondeau. Justin Vincent of Salem is the son of the late Iva Ericksen and has visited this area on several occasions seeking places and names to learn of his great-grandfather's years here. In the summer of 1974 he and Mrs. Vincent were accompanied by Mrs. Kirk who took a lively interest in viewing places she had not been in more than sixty years. They have been most cooperative in as-

sisting in gathering material for this story. Joseph, Jr., his wife and many others of the family are buried in the cemetery at Athens, far from their farm home at Adams. As before stated it was not possible to trace all the family members but whoever and wherever they may be, they have a heritage of which to be very proud. It is not too many to have seen Oregon develop from a true wilderness into a mighty state it had become by the end of his life span. Present residents may not know for whom Lavadour Creek was named but they know the name. Many may not know that the "saddle" at the end of "Old Baldy" more properly known as Bland Mountain, is known to many as the Lavadour Gap, since it leads to the headwaters of the creek of that name. The one sad note is that so much has been lost the way of history with stories forgotten because of inattention of younger generations and the lack of written records of the happenings of years long ago.

The Umpqua Trapper

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